

Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) FY12 Performance Plan

Contribution to Montgomery Results

- A Responsive and Accountable County Government
- A Strong and Vibrant Economy
- Vital Living for all of Our Residents

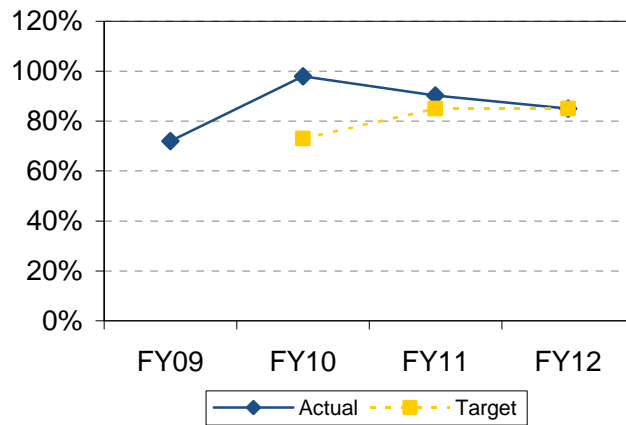
OCP At-A-Glance

| What OCP Does and for Whom | How Much |
|---|---|
| <p><u>Overall</u></p> <p>The mission of the Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) is to administer and enforce consumer protection laws prohibiting unfair and deceptive business practices in order to ensure integrity in our marketplace for consumers and businesses. OCP investigates and attempts to resolve consumer complaints including home sales and improvements; automobile sales and repairs; towing and other consumer transactions in a manner that is both timely and fair.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total FY12 Budget: \$ 1,948,320 • Total WY: 14.5 (15 Full time)* <p>*Does not include 1 full-time, filled Investigator position that was lapsed to meet the FY12 budget.</p> |
| <p><u>Complaint Investigation and Conciliation</u></p> <p>OCP receives inquiries and written complaints from consumers regarding a myriad of consumer transactions. Responses to inquiries are provided and written complaints are investigated in an effort to resolve disputes and ensure compliance with applicable laws.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$584,496 (29.9% of Budget) • WY: 4.2 (29.0% of Personnel) |
| <p><u>Law Enforcement</u></p> <p>OCP issues subpoenas and civil citations, executes settlement agreements, conducts administrative hearings, initiates legal action, and collaborates with the Police, State's Attorney, County Attorney, Attorney General, Federal Trade Commission, Postal Inspection Service, and other state and federal law enforcement agencies to enforce consumer protection laws.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$409,147 (20.9% of Budget) • WY: 3.1 (21% of Personnel) |
| <p><u>Consumer Education</u></p> <p>OCP leverages its ability to educate consumers by communicating via radio, television, and electronic and print media. OCP issues news releases, provides media requested interviews, and conducts presentations, public forums, and training sessions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$409,147 (20.9% of Budget) • WY: 3.1 (21% of Personnel) |
| <p><u>Non-Core Mission Activities</u></p> <p>OCP administers a variety of consumer related programs, including serving as staff to the Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC) which provides an alternative dispute resolution mechanism for the one-third (33%) of county residents living within home owner and condominium associations. OCP is responsible for administering county laws regarding Energy & Environmental Advocacy (including PEPCO), contracts for Domestic Workers, property tax disclosures, new home sales, and licensing of certain other businesses.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$545,530 (28.3% of Budget) • WY: 4.2 (29% of Personnel) |

Performance

Headline Performance Measure#1: Restitution

Restitution received as a percent of investigator-validated restitution.



| | FY09 | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|--------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| Actual | 72% | 98% | 90% | 85% |
| Target | | 73% | 85% | 85% |

Story Behind the Performance

Contributing Factors

- OCP's investigative staff review and resolve consumer complaints regarding a multitude of consumer transactions. OCP investigators have developed subject matter expertise in many areas including: automotive repairs and sales, home improvement fraud, and financial scams.
- As a law enforcement agency, OCP is empowered to issue civil citations and administrative subpoenas, enter into settlement agreements, and assist in the prosecution of criminal violations.
- The skill of OCP's investigative staff to focus on the critical elements of a complaint, identify the potential violations of county, state, and federal law, and take the action necessary to negotiate equitable resolutions, enables OCP to maintain an extremely high restitution rate.

Restricting Factors

- The overall economic climate can have a negative impact on the ability to resolve consumer complaints. During periods of economic hardship, more merchants go out of business, are less likely to voluntarily resolve complaints, and may take greater risk with deceptive marketing practices.

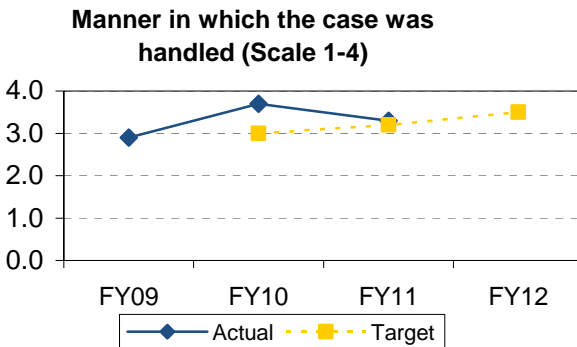
- A reduction in investigative staff results in an increased case load for each investigator. The size of a case load limits the amount of time and resources each investigator may expend in researching and attempting to resolve complex cases.
- Any delay in consumers filing complaints with OCP may increase the difficulty in OCP's ability to resolve disputes. If complaints are filed long after the consumer transaction occurred, it may be more difficult for OCP to contact itinerant merchants, obtain necessary documentation, or initiate enforcement action.

What we propose to do to improve performance

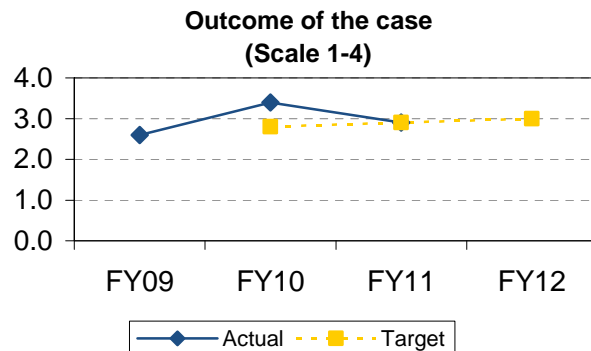
- A reduction in OCP investigative staff necessitates the need for OCP investigators to be "cross-trained" to handle complaints beyond their respective specialties. Steps are being taken to provide "back-up" coverage for investigative staff so that each investigator has the ability to respond to complaints beyond his or her primary subject matter expertise.
- OCP's supervisor will be conducting timely reviews of pending cases in order to identify cases for which special assistance or enhanced action is appropriate. Protocols for streamlining the issuance of civil citations and administrative subpoenas will increase efficiency to combat larger case loads.
- New procedures will be developed to enhance the initial screening process of new complaints in order to more quickly identify time sensitive complaints and limit difficulties in resolving complaints which are filed by consumers long after the transaction occurred.

Headline Performance Measure#2: Customer Satisfaction

Average OCP customer satisfaction for Manner and Outcome (Scale 1-4)



| | FY09 | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|------------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| Manner 1-4 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| Target | | 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.5 |



| | FY09 | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|-------------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| Outcome 1-4 | 2.6 | 3.4 | 2.9 | 3 |
| Target | | 2.8 | 2.9 | 3 |

Story Behind the Performance

Contributing Factors

- Expansive subject matter and legal knowledge is required for OCP investigative staff to research and resolve complaints regarding many different types of consumer transactions. In addition, it is critically important for OCP investigative staff to communicate with consumers and merchants in a fair, respectful, and caring manner.
- OCP investigative staff are seasoned professionals adept at communicating with individuals who are distressed and involved in frustrating disputes. OCP staff daily face the challenge of diffusing emotionally charged interpersonal interactions between consumers and merchants.
- OCP staff recognize the distinction between a consumer's satisfaction with the "manner" in which a complaint is investigated and the "outcome" of the investigation.

Restricting Factors

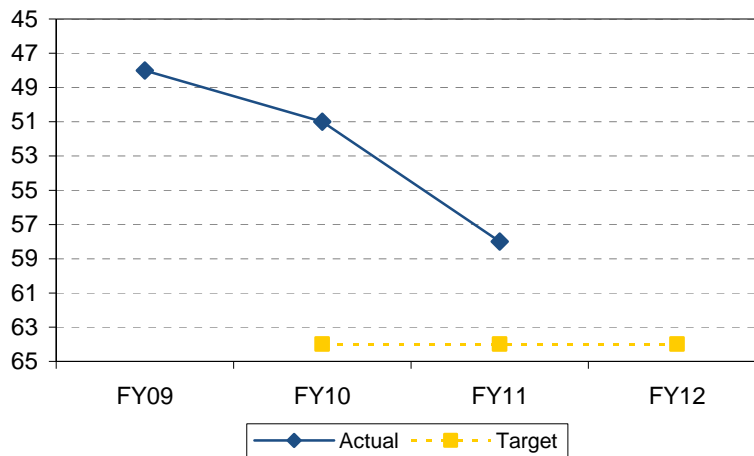
- Misdirected frustration is a common trait expressed by consumers and merchants in which the individual's dissatisfaction with the nature of the outcome is unfortunately expressed as dissatisfaction with the action of OCP staff.
- Increased case loads limit the amount of time each OCP investigator can research and resolve individual complaints. Limitations on the time available to handle each complaint may have the tendency to reduce each investigator's ability to ideally take extra time to interact in a calming and reassuring manner.
- The pressures created by a difficult economic climate tend to exacerbate the urgency with which consumers expect results and tend to reduce a merchant's financial ability to quickly resolve complaints.

What we propose to do to improve performance

- OCP staff are encouraged to participate in OCP training classes regarding how to deal with difficult people, and time at OCP monthly staff meetings will be devoted to discussing best practices for interpersonal communication.
- OCP's dedicated team of volunteers will be utilized to provide additional interaction with consumers and merchants. This will enable OCP investigative staff to provide more frequent "updates" to consumers and merchants which typically serves to increase the rate of satisfaction with the level of customer service.
- OCP's supervisor will review those closed complaints for which survey results could have been better, to determine if any issues or patterns can be identified which may enable OCP investigative staff to improve satisfaction rates.

Headline Performance Measure#3: Work Days

Average time in workdays to investigate and close a written complaint



| | FY09 | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|------------------------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| Total Average Workdays | 48 | 51 | 58 | 64 |
| Target | | 64 | 64 | 64 |

Story Behind the Performance**Contributing Factors**

- All written complaints received by OCP are initially reviewed and assigned to the appropriate investigative staff within 2 business days. OCP's staff operate in an office environment dedicated to customer service.
- Initial form letters have been developed to be sent electronically to the consumer and merchant in order to speed up the process and to save funds for postage and paper.
- Dedicated and trained volunteers have been assigned to work with most OCP investigators and provide support in researching and resolving individual complaints.

Restricting Factors

- The amount of time necessary to research and resolve consumer complaints is directly related to the nature of the transaction and can be affected by the amount of money in dispute. Complex cases and complaints in which it is difficult to locate the merchant can require extra time to resolve.
- Reduction in staffing results in increased case loads which limit the amount of time OCP investigators can devote to researching and resolving each case.

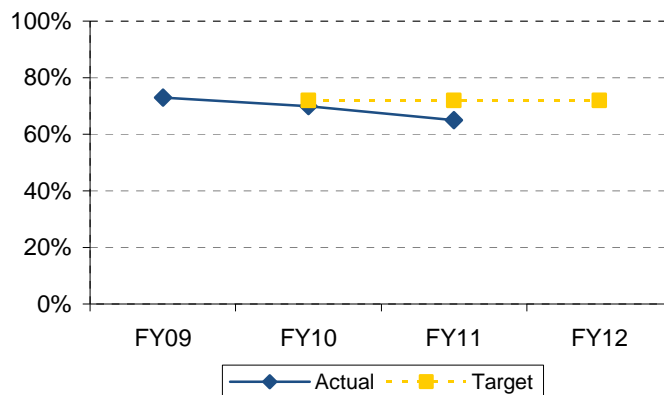
- OCP's complaint tracking and case management system is only able to maintain basic information, does not have document scanning capabilities, and has only limited report generating capabilities.

What we propose to do to improve performance

- OCP's investigative staff is on track to research and resolve consumer complaints in a timely manner and within OCP's benchmark. OCP's supervisor will review pending cases with each investigator to identify issues which potentially could cause delays in order to offer suggestions for handling special cases.
- OCP's operations team will seek to develop additional form letters and enhanced use of email messages to ensure timely communications with all parties and enable OCP's investigative staff to resolve and close cases promptly.
- OCP will develop a list of online research tools and applications which would enable OCP investigative staff to more promptly and efficiently gather information needed to investigate and resolve complaints.

Headline Performance Measure#4: Resolution

Percent of OCP cases that are resolved.



| | FY09 | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|---------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| Percent | 73% | 70% | 65% | 72% |
| Target | | 72% | 72% | 72% |

Story Behind the Performance

Contributing Factors

- OCP investigative staff have jurisdiction with respect to, and attempt to resolve, most types of consumer transactions in Montgomery County. These can range from simple advertising complaints to complex foreclosure rescue scams. Some complaints may only involve a few dollars while other complaints may involve hundreds of thousands of dollars.

- Consumer transactions may violate civil consumer protection laws and may also constitute violations of related criminal laws. Enforcement activity resulting in court action can be protracted and time consuming.
- During periods of economic hardship in the marketplace, the nature of the consumer complaints can be more complex and difficult to resolve. OCP's jurisdiction is broad and OCP generally does not have the ability to limit the types of complaints for which consumers will seek assistance.

Restricting Factors

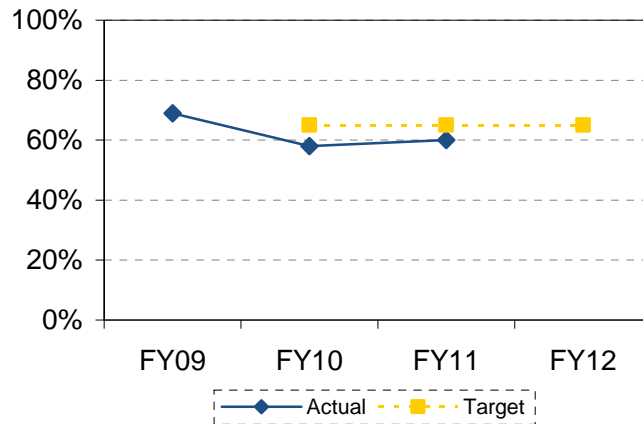
- During periods of economic hardship there may be an increase in the number of merchants going out of business and the number of itinerant sellers who cannot be located after the transaction. The ability to resolve a complaint is directly and adversely effected by an inability to locate a merchant.
- OCP complaints are closed by each investigator upon exhaustion of all settlement and enforcement options. A complaint is recorded as "resolved" by OCP only if the consumer is satisfied with the outcome of the complaint; regardless of the amount of effort expended by OCP.
- For most of FY11, impound towing complaints have been the single largest consumer complaint category. In the majority of these highly frustrating and emotionally charged complaints, a resolution to the consumer's satisfaction cannot be obtained. The towing law anticipates that aggrieved consumers will seek restitution in court. OCP has been collaborating with the Police and Regional Service Centers and has devoted considerable effort to attempt to prevent these complaints from being generated.

What we propose to do to improve performance

- OCP's supervisor will review pending cases with each investigator to identify those cases which appear to be difficult or impossible to resolve. The purpose of this early review is to determine if any special action by OCP staff could result in a favorable resolution to the complaint.
- Foster and enhance collaboration with other regulatory agencies including the State's Attorney, Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, and the Maryland Attorney General's Office to promote joint investigations and to exchange information which may enable OCP to resolve certain cases.
- Initiate regulatory review of impound towing "hot spots" in Wheaton, Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Rockville in order to reduce the number of towing complaints received by OCP. A reduction in this category of complaint would inherently serve to increase OCP's ability to resolve the complaints received by OCP.

Headline Performance Measure#5: CCOC Cases

Percent of CCOC cases resolved prior to a hearing.



| | FY09 | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|---------|------|------|------|-------------------|
| Percent | 69% | 58% | 60% | 65% |
| Target | | 65% | 65% | 65% |

Story Behind the Performance**Contributing Factors**

- One OCP investigator is dedicated full-time to CCOC cases. Two volunteers have been recruited, trained and assigned to assist with CCOC matters.
- OCP has continued its partnership with the Montgomery County Conflict Resolution Center to provide mediation services for CCOC cases at no cost.
- OCP staff have assisted in organizing and conducting an annual training session for the directors of all condominium and homeowner associations on a variety of topics designed to enhance their ability to operate common ownership communities.

Restricting Factors

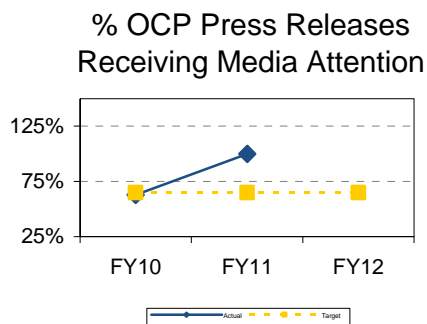
- Disputes between residents of common ownership communities and their governing boards can be contentious and fraught with personality disputes and emotionally charged issues.
- One third of County residents now live in common ownership communities. The CCOC has jurisdiction with respect to many types of complaints. However, complaints by residents regarding the “business judgment” of the governing body may not be subject to CCOC jurisdiction.

- In functioning as “mini-governments,” the rules and regulations of common ownership communities are subject to differences of interpretation which may result in difficult to resolve disputes.

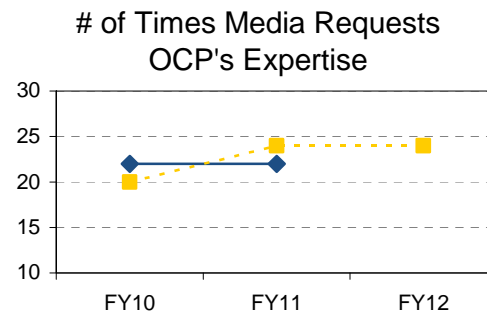
What we propose to do to improve performance

- OCP staff will endeavor to create and publish resource information in an effort to help residents and their governing bodies administer functions such as elections and rule making which have the capacity to generate complaints.
- OCP staff will take additional steps to index and publish CCOC decisions on the CCOC section of OCP’s webpage so that residents and governing bodies can more easily have access to past CCOC decisions.
- OCP staff will coordinate with CCOC to develop targeted training seminars to educate residents and governing bodies about best practices in an effort to prevent complaints from being filed.

Headline Performance Measure#6: Media



| | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|--------|------|------|-------------------|
| Actual | 63% | 100% | 65% |
| Target | 65% | 65% | 65% |



| | FY10 | FY11 | FY12 Projected |
|--------|------|------|-------------------|
| Actual | 22 | 22 | 24 |
| Target | 20 | 24 | 24 |

Story Behind the Performance

Contributing Factors

- OCP continues to receive requests for expert advice on topics ranging from recovering from a snow storm to understanding the terms for gift cards. OCP’s specialized staff contributed to over twenty news segments in FY11.
- OCP continues to develop its relationship with local media and helped produce several news segments including a hidden camera segment in reference to an air duct cleaning scam with a well known local reporter.

- In FY11, OCP successfully partnered with County Council Members and residential facilities catering to senior residents to produce and promote consumer education events.

Restricting Factors

- OCP's staff reductions have impacted the amount of time that OCP can devote to media without impacting other vital areas.
- In the past, OCP has leveraged its resources by utilizing specialized volunteers. The volunteer program was expanded to include additional tasks to support staff. The need for a social media volunteer was identified and advertised, but without the ability to pay a stipend, our volunteer pool for this position was not adequate.

What we propose to do to improve performance

- OCP has developed an internship opportunity for a Social Media Intern who will be tasked with developing and promoting a social outreach program.
- OCP will review and develop more computer based outreach programs to possibly include online questions/answers and RSS feeds.
- OCP will utilize the county's new internet Content Management System to improve our webpages.

Headline Performance Measure#7: How did customer find out about OCP?

| Communication Type | FY10 | FY11 |
|--------------------|------|------|
| Another Agency | 13% | 13% |
| County Website | 34% | 32% |
| Family/Friend | 21% | 23% |
| Newspaper | 1% | 2% |
| Radio | 1% | 1% |
| Television | 1% | 1% |
| Other | 29% | 29% |

Story Behind the Performance

Contributing Factors

- OCP produces its complaint form in English as well as in Spanish, the most widely spoken foreign language in the county. OCP distributes both forms as needed either in hardcopy, as a download, or electronically as an attachment.
- OCP partners with other Public Safety departments to promote consumer protection and other related safety issues involving multiple agencies.
- OCP continues to cultivate its relationship with news media to reach consumers.
- OCP has increased its use of the county's e-subscribe service by promoting our Consumer Alerts and developing newsletters/alerts focused on common ownership community issues.

Restricting Factors

- Alternate forms of communication continue to grow, sometimes making it difficult to stand out.
- OCP's staff has taken on additional duties, limiting the time available to devote to different program goals.

What we propose to do to improve performance

- OCP will continue promoting use of low-cost, high visibility mediums of communication.
- OCP will continue to recruit social media interns.
- OCP will explore opportunities to partner with other non-profits and for-profits to provide consumer education programs.

Appendix A: Budget

- Due to the County's budget constraints, during the last 4 fiscal years OCP's staff has been reduced by 30%; from 23 employees to 16 employees. Although staff has been reduced, new responsibilities have been assigned to OCP. OCP is making every effort to continue its outstanding record of service to the County.

Appendix B: Implementation

- See attached

Appendix C: Data Development Agenda

- Not Applicable.

ADDENDUM: Overarching Goals for Responsive and Sustainable Leadership

Responsive and Sustainable Leadership has been the cornerstone of the County Executive's vision for Montgomery County government. To advance this vision, we have identified the following overarching goals for all County departments:

1) Collaborations and Partnerships:

Department actively participates in collaborations and partnerships with other departments to improve results beyond the scope of its own performance measures. Please only list accomplishments that had positive results for other department(s) as well.

OCP collaborates extensively with many Montgomery County Departments, state and federal agencies, and non-profit and for-profit organizations. For example:

- Police Department – OCP works with the Police Department regarding unlicensed home improvement contractors, financial fraud, towing, pawn shops, and providing in-service training to police officers. In FY11 OCP devoted considerable resources to working with the Police Department in an effort to address aggressive and predatory towing practices in certain “hot-spot” areas which have interfered with the Police Department's performance of its core mission.

- Fire Rescue Service – OCP continues to partner with the Fire Rescue Service on consumer safety issues. OCP and FRS issued a joint press release regarding the installation and inspection of gas appliances in Montgomery County following safety concerns raised during an in-depth investigation into appliances sold by “big-box” stores in Montgomery County.
- Department of Housing & Community Affairs – OCP works with DHCA regarding foreclosure information and assistance, warranty issues in Moderately Priced Dwelling Units, and landlord-tenant issues regarding room rental cases. In addition, OCP has served as an arbitrator in resolving construction disputes related to DHCA rehab loan programs.
- Department of Permitting Services – OCP continues to work with DPS in licensing new home builders, warranty enforcement related to building codes, and preventing unlicensed contractors from receiving building permits. In addition, OCP is collaborating with DPS in enforcement action regarding the illegal posting of commercial signs in and on County streets.
- Sheriff's Office – OCP works with the Sheriff's office to safeguard consumers' possessions from being lost when a business is being evicted. This NACo award winning program enables the Sheriff's office and OCP to coordinate action and return goods and financial records to consumers.
- Health & Human Services – OCP works with HHS to review used car sales and repair proposals for consumers receiving welfare avoidance grants. OCP's certified automotive expert reviews the proposals in order to determine if such expenditures are prudent.
- Regional Service Centers – OCP provides educational materials to the Service Centers and will continue to provide speakers for events. In FY11, OCP began working with the Mid-County Regional Services Center and the Police Department to address aggressive and predatory impound towing activities.
- Local Businesses – OCP continues to look for opportunities to partner with local for-profit businesses to conduct consumer education outreach events. In FY11 OCP conducted information distribution events at 2 major shopping centers in Montgomery County.
- Montgomery County Conflict Resolution Center – OCP continues to partner with MCCRC to provide free mediation services for CCOC and consumer cases.
- State & Federal Agencies – OCP works closely with the Maryland Attorney General's Office, the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, the Comptroller of Maryland, the Federal Trade Commission, and other regulatory agencies regarding a variety of consumer protection issues and investigations.

2) **Workforce Diversity and MFD Procurement:**

Department actively participates in the recruitment of a diverse workforce and enforcement of MFD procurement requirements.

- OCP continues to maintain a diverse workforce that mirrors the increased diversity within the County. OCP does not expect to have any procurement contracts in FY12.

3) **Innovations:**

Department actively seeks out innovative new technology and processes to improve performance and productivity.

- OCP has drastically decreased its print and mail expenditures from FY08 to FY11 (-84%). OCP streamlined its licensing application process and now provides licensing and renewal information electronically. OCP also substantially reduced photocopying expenses related to cases heard before the Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC). These cases, often totaling 100-500 pages in length, are no longer provided in hard-copy. Instead, case documents are scanned, password protected, and uploaded to the web. Hearing panelists are provided with electronic access and are able to view the documents online during the hearing.
- OCP has instituted a new referral process to provide consumers with the best information available for complaints falling outside of OCP's jurisdiction. Complaints are no longer referred at the administrative level. All complaints are reviewed by the Program Administrator and then referred by OCP's experienced investigative staff.
- OCP has improved its business licensing program by updating and expanding its web presence. Business applicants can obtain extensive information online and application forms and laws are also available online.

4) **Effective and Productive Use of the Workforce/Resources:**

Department actively works to effectively and productively use its workforce/resources, including, but not limited to, better management of overtime, implementation of productivity improvements, reduction of ongoing costs, and efficient use of other resources.

- No overtime was charged by OCP in FY10 and FY11.
- OCP continues its collaboration with local colleges, graduate schools, and the business community to recruit volunteers. In FY11, OCP volunteers contributed over 2,900 work hours, enabling OCP to leverage its workforce and resources.

5) **Succession Planning:**

Department actively plans for changes in its workforce, in order to maintain continuity of services, develop staff capabilities, maintain and/or transfer knowledge, and enhance performance.

- OCP plans for workforce changes by cross training its staff to ensure a seamless transition of work assignments, to maintain and provide services, to transfer knowledge, and to enhance performance.
- 50% of OCP's investigators have subject matter expertise for which succession planning is needed. Efforts are being made to provide cross-training in certain areas. For example, investigators with knowledge of the criminal justice system have been working in tandem with less experienced investigators to impart institutional knowledge.

- The OCP Director has monthly one-on-one meetings with managers. Agendas for these meetings include discussions on a wide variety of industry related issues, review of office policies, enforcement of sound decision making, and strategic planning development. This training encourages managers to reach out for greater responsibility.
- OCP frequently uses the team approach to complete projects. This method has a mentoring affect on lower grade employees, helping them to develop skills and capabilities that may be needed for future projects and promotional opportunities.

6) **Internal Controls and Risk Management:**

- No internal audits have been performed within the last 12 months.
- Department actively assesses its internal control strengths, weaknesses, and risks regarding compliance with laws, regulations policies and stewardship over County assets.
- OCP proactively manages risk pertaining to improving workplace safety, decreasing work-related injuries, and reducing County exposure to litigation.
- OCP complies with State laws and County regulations regarding occupational injury.
- OCP has developed internal financial, administrative and work safety controls.
- OCP actively practices sound stewardship over County assets.

7) **Environmental Stewardship:**

Department actively makes appropriate changes to workplace operations, workflow, employee behavior, equipment use, and public interactions to increase energy-efficiency, reduce its environmental footprint, and implement other environmentally responsible practices.

- OCP makes appropriate and responsible use of office equipment to increase energy efficiency and to reduce its environmental footprint.
- OCP continues to comply with the County's paper reduction initiative.
- OCP encourages recycling and maintains appropriately labeled, conveniently located recycle bins throughout the office.

8) **Mandatory Employee Training:**

Department systematically monitors and actively enforces employees' mandatory and/or required trainings.

- 100% of OCP's employees have taken mandatory training requirements and all staff will be taking refresher classes.
 - All staff has completed courses in Workplace Harassment, Limited English Proficiency, and Security Awareness. Staff will be scheduling refresher classes on a revolving timeline.
- The County's mandatory training will be included on all employees' performance plans and progress/completion will be discussed and rated during employees' performance evaluations.

Appendix B: Implementation

| Headline Measure | What We Propose to Do: | Timeframe |
|---|--|-----------|
| #1: Average restitution received as a percent of restitution asked for by the consumer and validated by the assigned OCP case investigator | 1. OCP investigators will be “cross-trained” to handle complaints beyond their respective specialties. So that each investigator has the ability to respond to complaints beyond their primary subject matter expertise. | 12 months |
| | 2. Investigative supervisor will be conducting timely reviews of pending cases in order to identify cases for which special assistance or enhanced action is appropriate and streamlining the process for issuing civil citations and administrative subpoenas. | 3 months |
| | 3. New procedures will be developed to enhance the initial screening process of new complaints in order to more quickly identify time sensitive complaints and limit difficulties in resolving complaints which were filed by consumers long after the transaction occurred. | 3 months |
| #2: Average OCP customer satisfaction | 1. Encourage OCP staff to participate in-service training classes regarding how to deal with difficult people and devote time at monthly staff meetings to discuss best practices for interpersonal communication. | 3 months |
| | 2. Use team of volunteers to provide additional interaction with consumers and merchants to provide more frequent “updates” which may result in an increase rate of customer service satisfaction. | On-going |
| | 3. Investigative supervisor will review all closed complaints for which survey results could have been better, to determine if any issues or patterns can be identified which may enable OCP investigative staff to improve satisfaction rates. | 3 months |
| #3: Average time in workdays to investigate and close a written complaint | 1. Investigative supervisor will review pending cases with each investigator to identify issues which potentially could cause delays in order to offer suggestions for handling special cases. | 3 months |
| | 2. OCP’s operations team will seek to develop additional form letters and enhanced use of email messages to ensure timely communications with all parties and enable OCP’s investigative staff to resolve and close cases promptly. | On-going |
| | 3. OCP will develop a list of online research tools and applications which would enable OCP investigative staff to more promptly and efficiently gather information needed to investigate and resolve complaints. | 6 months |

| Headline Measure | What We Propose to Do: | Timeframe |
|--|---|-----------|
| #4: Percent of OCP-initiated consumer protection cases closed that are resolved by OCP | 1. Investigative supervisor will review pending cases with each investigator to identify those cases which appear to be difficult or impossible to resolve to determine if any special action by OCP staff could result in a favorable resolution to the complaint. | 6 months |
| | 2. OCP will enhance collaboration with other regulatory agencies to promote joint investigations and to exchange information which may enable OCP to resolve certain cases. | On-going |
| | 3. Initiate regulatory review of impound towing "hot spots" in Wheaton, Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Rockville in order to reduce the number of consumer complaints received by OCP. | 6 months |
| #5: Percent of Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC) cases resolved prior to a hearing | 1. CCOC staff will publish resource information in an effort help residents and their governing bodies administer functions like elections and rule setting. which have the capacity to generate complaints. | On-going |
| | 2. CCOC staff will index and publish decisions on OCP's webpage so that residents and governing bodies can have access to past CCOC decisions. | 6 months |
| | 3. CCOC staff will develop targeted training seminars to educate residents and governing bodies about best practices in an effort to prevent complaints from being filed. | 3 months |
| #6: Percent of media news releases receiving media coverage/Number of times media outlets, including print news, television and radio, seek out OCP's expertise | 1. OCP will continue to advertise an internship opportunity for a Social Media volunteer who will be tasked with developing and promoting a social outreach program. | On-going |
| | 2. OCP will develop more computer based outreach programs to possibly include online question/answers and RSS feeds. | 12 months |
| | 3. OCP will utilize the county's new internet Content Management System to improve our webpage. | On-going |
| #7: Percent of consumers using OCP services who found out about the office through each communication method | 1. Continue promoting use of low-cost, high visibility mediums of communication. | On-going |
| | 2. OCP will continue to recruit social media interns. | On-going |
| | 3. OCP will explore opportunities to partner with for-profits and non-profits to provide consumer educational programs. | On-going |